



**TRANSCRIPT OF JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH
AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KEVIN RUDD, AUSTRALIAN TRADE
MINISTER CRAIG EMERSON AND JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER SEIJI
MAEHARA**

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E & O E – PROOF ONLY

KEVIN RUDD: Now firstly I'd like very much to welcome our good friend the Foreign Minister of Japan, Seiji Maehara, here to Canberra today.

Our Australian friends should understand one key fact: this is Foreign Minister Maehara's first official bilateral overseas visit since he's become Foreign Minister of Japan.

And the Foreign Minister has emphasised to me personally that he wants to use this visit to underline the importance which he personally attaches to the Japan-Australia relationship.

Australia and Japan enjoy a comprehensive political, economic and security relationship. We are fellow members of the G20; we are fellow members of APEC; we are fellow members of the EAS. We've been active in every UN agency since the '50s. We are very close partners, both within the region and across the world.

The Foreign Minister and our Trade Minister have had excellent discussions this morning on the Japan-Australia FTA negotiations, and Craig will speak to that in a minute.

Already, later this morning and later this afternoon, I've had and will continue to have discussions with the Foreign Minister on the broader political and foreign policy and security relationship between Australia and Japan.

Over the last three years our bilateral security cooperation has become closer and closer.

We both also attach great importance to our expanding trilateral security dialogue between Japan, Australia and the United States.

The Foreign Minister and I also jointly chair a new cross-regional grouping within the United Nations on nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

This grouping contains many countries from Europe, from Latin America, and from our own region, and our common resolve is to use it to give effect to the implementation of the recommendations of the last Nuclear Non-Proliferation Review Conference.

Today, the Foreign Minister and I have released a joint declaration on our future program of work through this cross-regional grouping in nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

We are both also concerned about recent reports concerning North Korea's uranium enrichment program and light water reactor.

And we will work closely with our ally, the United States, on a common response to this challenge to our region's wider security.

We've also committed ourselves to work closely on the future development of our region's architecture through the EAS.

The Foreign Minister has also made plain Japan's concerns about long-term secure supply of rare earths to the Japanese economy.

I would say to the Foreign Minister that Australia stands ready to be a long-term, secure, reliable supplier of rare earths to the Japanese economy in the future.

So, Seiji, thank you for coming to Australia.

He was originally going to come on Sunday and we were going to have a barbeque at home, but he was late.

I was going to introduce him to the finer arts of Australian barbeque cooking- Teppanyaki-style.

But it's good to have you in Australia, and you are a friend of Australia, and we regard you with the utmost respect as a distinguished foreign minister of Japan.

I'll now ask Craig to speak on trade before Seiji responds and then we'll take your questions.

CRAIG EMERSON: Thank you, Kevin. And welcome, Seiji, again.

Today, in a meeting between Seiji Maehara and myself, we agreed on a fresh start to negotiations for a free-trade agreement between our two countries.

In a twelfth round of negotiations, which will take place early next year, we'll build on the progress that has been made since April 2007, and we will make a fresh start on those issues that have impeded the successful conclusion of the trade negotiations.

Minister Maehara's visit to Australia is, as Kevin pointed out, his first bilateral overseas visit since becoming foreign minister. It's also his first overseas visit since the release of the basic policy on comprehensive economic partnerships.

Minister Maehara's choice of Australia for his first visit emphasises the importance that Japan attaches to the economic and trading relationship between our two countries.

And you should know that Seiji flew right through the night to come here and join us in federal parliament, and then he's getting on a plane to go back to Japan tonight. So it's a punishing schedule.

KEVIN RUDD: That's what watching Question Time does to you.

CRAIG EMERSON: That's right; it takes you back home quickly.

The Gillard Government strongly welcomes the basic policy that has been announced by the Kan Government, a policy of reaching out and engaging in trading relationships with the region backed by domestic reform.

In a profoundly important new thinking, the Kan Government has decided to deploy bold policies to realise the full potential of Japan's agriculture by increasing its competitiveness while reviewing border measures such as tariffs.

This is very encouraging for Australia but a testament to the reforming vision of the Kan Government.

Seiji and I also discussed the Trans-Pacific Partnership and our joint efforts to restart the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations. I won't go into the detail because I don't want Seiji to miss his plane, so I'm happy to answer any questions on that.

But I think I should now hand over to Seiji.

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: On this, the occasion of this visit to Australia I have had the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister Gillard, with Foreign Minister Rudd, and with Trade Minister Emerson, and have had very significant discussions with all of them. At the same time I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Australian side for the very, very warm manner in which they have welcomed me.

Today I took the opportunity in between our talks to pay a visit to the Australian War Memorial. At the memorial I placed a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and paid a visit to the statue of former prisoner of war, Sir Edward Dunlop.

In particular there were some 22,000 people who were prisoners of war during the Second World War. I wanted to take the opportunity to express or to demonstrate my sense - my feeling of apology towards those people by visiting the statue of Sir Dunlop. In particular, next year, a number of former POWs will be visiting Japan, and I look forward to giving them the warmest welcome that we possibly can.

On the occasion of this visit we have discussed three topics.

The first was the further advancement of the Australian - the Japan-Australia strategic partnership.

The second topic that we discussed was to add vitality to the Japan-Australia EPA talks and to further strengthen the economic relationship between Australia and Japan.

The third topic was, that we discussed, was in the context of the regional and global relationship to further our partnership on that relationship - and to exchange views on it.

On the matter of North Korea and uranium enrichment, a matter that we share concerns about, we have reached agreement on working together on that, and also to working in close collaboration with the United States and cooperating together on that issue.

On the matter of the Australian Japan joint chairmanship of the non-nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation area, we have prepared a joint statement on our relationship and on the affirmation of our work in that area.

My particular emphasis on this trip has been enhancing the Japan-Australia economic relationship by, through progressing the Japan-Australia EPA talks.

Since I became, since I took up appointment as Foreign Minister, my focus has been on the economy and diplomacy and progressing, achieving progress in these areas. In particular I have focused on ensuring stable supply of resources and energy and on seeking to export superior Japanese capabilities in infrastructure.

These three pillars of my focus are all areas in which Australia has an important national presence. Up until now Australia has been a stable supplier of resources and of natural resources and food to Japan, and I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Australia for that supply. As Foreign Minister Rudd has indicated we will be looking to work, to collaborate on the area of rare earths, and I believe that this is a particularly excellent outcome in terms of the agreements we have reached on this occasion.

As Trade Minister Emerson referred to there have been 11 talks on the EPA since the start in April 2007. I think another excellent agreement that we have reached on this occasion is in relation to those stalled talks. I think with the Kan government's emphasis on - with the launch of the Kan Administration's basic policy which places the Australia-Japan relationship as a very important one. We look forward to moving forward with those talks on the occasion of the 12th talks.

Finally I would like to refer to the New Zealand coal mine accident where there are 29 miners currently trapped underground. I understand that two of those are Australians. May I express my sincere concern for them and my wishes that they will be able to be rescued as quickly as possible.

In the Chile mine accident, Japanese technology was also able to contribute. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that Japan stands ready to assist in every way that we can.

Thank you very much.

KEVIN RUDD: Okay folks. I understand the agreement is three questions a side. I might ask Seiji to begin by picking a Japanese journalist, and then we'll pick some other journalist.

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Speaks Japanese]

[Laughter]

QUESTION: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: Thank you, ma'am. I invite you to give us a question. My name is Iwata. I'm from Japan Broadcasting Corporation. Thank you sir. And for a very hard schedule. If I may ask a question in relation to your meetings today - you've met with Minister Emerson, Minister Rudd, and Prime Minister Gillard, and as we've already heard there has been discussion of stable supply of rare earths and the EPA. May I ask you sir if you could share with us anything in relation to the EPA Rare Earth TPP that has particularly struck you - and perhaps if you could comment on the results of today.

KEVIN RUDD: To Seiji?

SEIJI MAEHARA: Yeah.

KEVIN RUDD: I thought so.

[Laughter]

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: Well there were a whole range of important agreements that we reached, and also the agreement on a fresh start on our - on stalled talks. So while it was a very - it's been a very short visit I think that there have been a number of successes.

I don't think there's any particular theme that I can draw out from the discussions, but in terms of the cooperative relationship between Australia and Japan, the bilateral relationship, we have reached, of course, agreements, significant agreements on the economy, on trade, and on the security relationship.

But I think perhaps more imp... the most significant one for me has been the context of the regional and global relationship, and in particular the fact that we have been able to affirm our intent to work closely together on a whole range of issues in this sphere.

It seems to me that this confirmation of our agreement in the regional and global sphere indicates that the Australia-Japan relationship has reached a very mature stage.

KEVIN RUDD: The Australian side. Yes mate?

QUESTION: Mark Dodd from The Australian newspaper. Do both foreign ministers - did - on regional relationships, did the issue of China come up? And to what extent is China's increasing military assertiveness fostering closer military cooperation between the two countries and the US?

KEVIN RUDD: Let me, Mark, answer your question in two parts. On the first part, yes, China of course was discussed, as was the Korean Peninsula, as was the United States, as was Southeast Asia, as was Australia. That is normal; that's what foreign ministers talk about.

KEVIN RUDD: The second part of the answer is, why Japan and Australia are so committed to developing our region's future architecture, is to deal with rising powers like China, also, more broadly, rising powers like India, so that we establish long-term rules for the road, here, in the Asia-Pacific region.

KEVIN RUDD: Regional architecture and rules for the road are not aimed at any one particular state.

KEVIN RUDD: They're designed for all of us to preserve the stability which underpins our region's prosperity.

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: If I may add to comments made by Minister Rudd. China is - it is expected this year - will displace Japan to - overtake Japan to become the nation with the second largest GDP in the world.

We welcome China's peaceful development.

At the same time we hope that China will work with us to resolve the problems of the region and the globe.

In particular, as - we both, as foreign ministers, share the hope that, in the context of North Korea, China will step up to its very significant role in the six party talks, as chair.

KEVIN RUDD: Our Japanese colleagues, another question.

QUESTION: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: My name is Kuroiwa from Yomiuri newspaper. This question is directed to both foreign ministers. I understand that, in relation to the DPRK - there is mention of that in the joint statement, as well - but what is written in the joint statement, I understand, is based on a report written by an American scientist. I wonder if you could elaborate on the significance of Japan and Australia cooperating on this issue.

KEVIN RUDD: If I could answer first. Japan and Australia believe in international law. And we believe, therefore, in upholding the provisions and the obligations which proceed from the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Therefore, when states violate those provisions, as North Korea has done repeatedly, they are in violation of international law.

In the period ahead we'll examine these matters very closely, in terms of our collaboration together with the United States, and any further deliberations by the UN Security Council.

And we'd also be looking to work with our friends in Beijing on this matter as well.

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: If I may add a comment. Japan has two-plus-two talks with only two nations, Australia and the United States. Therefore, we work not only with the United States very closely on a range of issues, but also with Australia, and that is to be expected.

And therefore we have engaged with Australia as the next nation after America on - in terms of entering into agreements on nuclear disarmament. We are discussing secu... information security, and becoming involved in a range of strategic and security issues.

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: Sorry?

TRANSLATOR: Not nuclear disarmament...

SEIJI MAEHARA: Hmm.

TRANSLATOR: But the two countries exchanging the acquisition and cross-servicing agreement, and also a whole information-sharing agreement is something that we are discussing as well.

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: So, in relation to the United Nations Security Council - while we need to look very seriously, and take at what North Korea is doing, and repudiate them seriously - in terms of the security relationship, we can expect that the United Nations will become an important venue for discussion and debate on this issue. And as a matter of course we would seek to work closely with our very strong and very close partner, Australia.

KEVIN RUDD: The Australian side. Yes mate?

QUESTION: Can I ask both ministers. Can you talk a bit more about what guarantees were sought in relation to rare earths. What exactly does that mean? Has Japan sought any security of supply access? And as part of that discussion, were any concerns raised about the Australian foreign investment regime, as opposed to Japanese investment into rare earths companies?

KEVIN RUDD: The first point is that the Australian Government understands the strategic significance of rare earths, globally.

Secondly we recognise the fact that within our country we possess a range of these rare earths by way of our own deposits.

Certainly Australia has noted the statements both public and private of concern by Japan concerning the future supply of rare earths.

And Foreign Minister Maehara restated those again today.

And what I simply did was restate long-standing Australian Government policy about being a secure, long-term supplier of energy and raw materials to our friends and partners around the world, that includes rare earths.

Obviously the normal commercial considerations in these matters are relevant.

But there is an important principle in international commercial law, and that is to ensure that contractual obligations long term, particularly in strategic areas, continue to be met, and Australia, consistent with our past, intends to perform that role in the future as well.

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: Japan is extremely grateful to Australia which has been a supplier of a whole range of natural resources for us, a stable supplier of these resources to date. We're very pleased that Australia is also able to give us a long-term commitment in relation to rare earths.

Of course in that context I would expect that Japanese companies that have an interest will respond in accordance with - strictly with Australian law.

KEVIN RUDD: And by the way on the third matters you raised, they were not raised.

Last question on the Japanese side.

QUESTION: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: My name is Yamaguchi from Asashi newspaper. I always ask questions of Minister Maehara so I would like to ask the Australian minister some questions today.

In Japan the idea of joining TPP is being examined in a positive manner, and this is something that is being discussed within Japan as well. If Japan were to join TPP would Australia welcome that, and what sort of challenges would you say might exist in the process of Japan joining the TPP. That is the first question.

And the second question is directed to the Foreign Minister regarding China. China has been creating some friction in a number of countries by advancing its power in the various maritime zones, and since Mr Rudd you are an expert on China if you could expand on what you think would be the backdrop against which China is making such moves.

CRAIG EMERSON: In the discussions that we had today and also in Yokohama, which were brief discussions, we talked a great deal about a bilateral economic partnership agreement between our countries, and we think that that is a very positive next step. The TPP is something in which Japan has expressed some interest but I think my understanding of Japan's steps are to take the steps on the bilateral free trade agreements or economic partnership agreements, and then consider its position in terms of possibly joining the TPP. And we welcome that approach.

KEVIN RUDD: On the question of China I go back to my comments on regional architecture, the EAS and rules of the road.

I think in dealing with some of the uncertainties which arise from the rise of China it's important for us all to work together in agreeing on rules of the road in our region which benefit everybody.

The global rules of the road for example through the WTO help China's rise.

Regional rules of the road on security, on economic questions, on environment questions, on political questions will also help the continued stability of the region and the continued rise of China.

At the same time those rules of the road give confidence to all the other countries in the region too.

What our region needs is new confidence and security building measures across East Asia. Europe's had them for more than half a century; we don't have any in our region. That helps give confidence to everybody.

But also to our friends at Asahi and Yomiuri, if I could say this, part of this also involves Japan playing a greater and greater regional and global role as the number three economy in the world.

You are a democracy and share our values, you are a strong economy, a massive economy and an overwhelming force for good in the world.

And you have a reformist Government in Japan which is seeking to grow Japan's economy into the future.

It's for reasons such as these that Australia fully supports Japan and India being permanent members of the Security Council.

Last question from Oz.

KEVIN RUDD: Yes, mate.

QUESTION: Max Blenkin from Australia Associated Press. Obviously Australia and Japan are in agreement on a lot of issues, one we're not on is whaling. Are we any closer to...

KEVIN RUDD: Thought you'd wreck the party, yeah go on.

[Laughter]

QUESTION: Any closer to resolving what seem to be irreconcilable differences?

KEVIN RUDD: Look this obviously is an area of continued disagreement between our two countries, that's been the case for a long, long time.

I don't know of any country in the world which Australia is disagreement free. But the test of friendship is that you amicably resolve these things.

And that's why we'll be attentive to what the independent umpire has to say.

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Speaks Japanese]

TRANSLATOR: Under the article 8 of the International Convention on Whaling a - special-permit whaling is a recognised activity.

This issue is the sole problem that - or issue on which both countries are not in agreement. With Australia and Japan both are focused on ensuring that this does not have any significant impact on the very important and very close partnerships that Australia and Japan are engaged in.

KEVIN RUDD: Okay, folks, well, Watashi wa Kevin desu.

[Laughter]

KEVIN RUDD: Arigatoo gozaimasu, Seiji.

SEIJI MAEHARA: [Laughs] Thank you, mate.

KEVIN RUDD: And Craig.

CRAIG EMERSON: Thank you. Thank you very much.

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